

12 Minutes Faster

A Message from Auntie Karen

Notice to reader :

Please find to follow one of many comments or stories that I've received. I will only publish stories or comments that I receive written/emailed authorization for. Further to that, I will never include full names or locations to protect the identities of those whom submit. Feel free to submit YOUR stories to me at any time!

Thank you – this website is only what YOU make it!

Auntie Karen

Comment / Story :

Dear Karen

You have my full permission to post my letter and my only hope is that it may make a difference. You see as I said I have seen a lot out on the road and as the title of my letter says people are risking their lives and those of others for not just minutes but seconds. This insanity must end. You may not have meant to become the spearhead of this movement but I think you have so please keep it going. I will support you in any way that I can.

I have buried so many of my friends from high school that I have lost count because of driving accidents and now that I am a "grown up" I am so afraid for the safety of my teenagers.

The roads have become this place where it seems to have become acceptable to lose people and we call them "accidents" but they are not, they are usually careless, selfish acts that as you rightly said are no different than putting a gun to someone's head and pulling the trigger. There is no longer a day that goes by that I don't shake my head at someone's driving and say to myself "what the hell are you doing you damn fool". After over 20 years on the road I could probably write you a letter every night telling another story about the things I have seen and after six months would still not have run out of stories. I am by no means saying I am perfect for I have made plenty of mistakes myself and also get in a hurry sometimes but I try to do as my Daddy taught me and always learn from my mistakes. I think if everyone would do this we could cut down alot on the "accidents". As my brother who was also a truck driver(passed away in 04) used to always say "they are just DYING to get there". This more than anything I think sums up what is going on out there eh! Anyway I thank you for contacting me and please feel free to do so any time.

Original Letter :

I too was quit moved by Karen's letter cause there has been many a time out on the road that I have asked my fellow driver if they would not mind killing me with there stupidity. You see I am a 24 year vet of the highway driving the big rigs down the highways(started when I was 18) and I would never claim to have seen it all but I certainly have seen a lot. I drive one of those Kenworths you are always referring to. But anyway I am just barely old enough(42) to have been taught and live by the old diesel drivers code which I'm sure you know is one life for ten. In short this means that I will not kill someone out on the road if I can help it and if necessary I will pull my wheel so another may live. Over the years I have only had to do this a few times and by the grace of God and a lot of luck(perhaps a little skill) have managed to keep everything upright.

Though last year this was put to the ultimate test and I actually had to say those dreaded words "this is it". You see I was coming up on an intersection of a typical Alberta highway that I had the right of way at about 3:30 PM(bet you know where this is going) and there was a school bus waiting at the stop sign. Well I guess he decided that he could not afford to wait the 12 seconds it would require for me to pass by and decided to try and beat me. Now I don't carry real expensive

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cargo and certainly not the precious cargo that he was carrying but I did not even have the time to ask why he would make such a foolish decision because I was literally looking at the faces of children when I had to make my decision.

Thank God I had thought about it a lot in the past and I did not hesitate for if I had it would certainly have been a disaster.

I pulled the wheel hard right to miss the back of the bus as he attempted a left turn toward me. It was real close but I missed the back of the bus by what looked like a few feet but had little time to think about it as I was now out of control heading for a 12 foot deep ditch which was full of farm machinery. I pulled the wheel hard left and prayed that it would grab as my right tire hit the gravel shoulder. Obviously it did or I would not be here to right this letter but it took all of my skills to keep from rolling. Now I know these words can never adequately describe what it was like to see those faces of those children looking at me but let me tell you that I have still not fully recovered from that day because I have children and I have to look at them everyday. They are now at that age of starting to drive and as I teach them I keep telling them that a trained monkey can drive a vehicle down the road but it is the decisions that we make behind the wheel that determine if we are a good driver or not.

So please take it from someone who has seen a lot of stupidity on the road to just make good decisions while behind the wheel. We can have all the debate's in the world about speeding and cell phones and everything else but if we continue to make bad decisions behind the wheel accidents will continue and people will continue to die.

For Karen I really do sympathize with that feeling of being helpless as people do these stupid things around us that may kill us but also think of us that live by the code and you may make me die so you can live and I have a wife and children who want me to come home.

Now I know there are lots out there who do not sympathize with us who drive the big rigs because they have seen the speeding trucks taking risks and all that. But please understand these are the new breed of truck driver who much like the teenage driver has not got that experience yet and is still too cocky and has a lot to learn. It is such a shame that our image has been so damaged by these drivers because there was a time when we were known as the angels of the highway always there to lend a helping hand when it was needed.

Please lets end the carnage and stop the senseless deaths. I think this was the message Karen wanted to get across and I for one fully support her. We all have friends and family and I think we all want to live another day to see them. So lets all stop being so cocky and just make good decisions behind the wheel and a lot more of us will make it home safe.

Harlan

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